1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

cipoto yearly in the great initiation festival for boys and girls. Consequently as they repeat each year the lessons of their own initiation, the ceremonies are the main vehicle of Yao culture.[1]

There are also two Moslem ceremonies:

(1) *Jando*, the boys' Moslem baptism, which takes about seven days, and is usually worked in with *lupanda*:

(2) *Nsondo*, the girls' Moslem baptism, which is the same as *jando*, but usually quite separate from *cipoto*. It is important that the wife of a Moslem should have her *nsondo* so that she knows how to prepare the food properly at Ramadan.

Menstrual and Other Taboos

Menstruation is held to be dangerous. A special mat is used by the woman during this time, and is rolled up and kept during the rest of the cycle. The hut is completely replastered after menstruation. Intercourse during menses leads to disease of the man. Sexual contact is dangerous to persons at certain other periods: during initiation ceremonies, during mourning, and for babies who have not been through the protective rite. The danger is thought to lie in *ndaka*, a dread disease charscterized by swelling. This may be transmitted by salt in the food. Deaths are often attributed to 'salt'. Much of the significance of the mourning is that medicines are prepared which protect the mourners against the dangers attendant on sexual activity.

Burial Rites

News of a death must be sent to the chief by a messenger carrying a single fowl. The chief gives a present of calico for wrapping the body, and a goat for the burial men. These are called *asolo*, neighbours unrelated to the dead, who volunteer for certain duties. They prepare the body for burial and carry it in procession to the graveyard outside the village. No uninitiated person is allowed to see the funeral. All who attend the burial are prohibited from sexual intercourse for one month. After this time the prohibition is lifted by a ceremony of beer drinking and feasting, and on the following day all fires in the village are extinguished, and then relit, and the mourners are shaved. A year later beer is brewed for a final ceremony.

For a period after her husband's death a widow is unclean, and has to be purified by ritual intercourse with a man who is paid. The widow is not allowed to remarry for two or three years. A widower leaves his wife's village, after receiving a parting gift. The widows of ordinary persons are not inherited. If a man has himself a 'name' (rank and social position), he has an heir, who inherits also the wives of his predecessor. But if the heir (the maternal nephew) has married a cross-cousin (mother's brother's daughter) he would not consider the wife's mother as his inherited wife.

Before the burial the dead man's hut used to be destroyed, together with his possessions. Immediately afterwards a consultation is held as to whether retaliatory action against sorcerers is called for. The *asolo*'s duties include not only the conducting of the burial, but also the subsequent inquiry and the conduct of the second ceremony, the beer drinking, at which they shave the mourners. A man who has

[1] Main sources for girls' initiation: Henkel, 1933, p. 19; Stannus, 1, 1910, pp. 189–7; 4, 1911, pp. 269–70; Stannus and Davey, 1913; Duff, 1903, pp. 312–15; Abdullah, 1919, pp. 16–17; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 129–30; Werner, 1906, pp. 126–7; Johnston, 1897, p. 420.

3:Stanzas D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

584 betrothed. In this latter case, the child lives with one of his wives and is brought up in his house.

881 When this girl first menstruates, she tells the man's wife who in turn informs her husband. He then goes out into the bush with his axe, while the wife reports to the young girl's mother and to the man's female relatives. The girl is put to rest on a mat in the hut, the women remaining with her after shutting and fastening the door. The man, meantime, cuts a strip of bark, hammers it out into a piece of cloth, and puts the cloth, wound round and round the stem of the tree from which he has taken it, on the roof of the hut where the girl lies. The first passer-by who notices this sign, spreads the news; then all the women in the village assemble and trill with their tongues to show their joy, while the women in the house sing.

Until the girl's menstrual period is over, the old women relatives sleep each night in her hut, and instruct her in the taboos relating to menstruation. The front door is kept closed, and exit for purposes of nature is made only through the back door. When the girl is up again, the fire in the hut is extinguished, the bark-cloth which she has worn and her sleeping mat are rolled up and put away in the veranda-room, and the girl, having procured clay, replasters the floor of the entire hut. A woman then brings fresh fire from another hut.

● 841 At subsequent menstrual periods, there is no ceremony. The girl, as is the custom of all women at such times, must sleep on a mat apart from her husband. Sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden under penalty of dire sickness. For the same reason, no menstruating woman may put salt in the food, etc. Until the girl's first menstrual period is over, the man to whom she is betrothed stays in the hut of another wife. Later, he may cohabit with the girl.

881 833 If the girl has not been to her initiation ceremony, *Chipoto*,[1] on returning to her husband's hut after this ceremony, the first coitus takes place in the veranda. It must be incomplete, so that ejaculation takes place after withdrawal and the semen falls upon her cloth. This should be taken by the girl to some of the old women in the village who report on the proceedings. Should withdrawal not have taken place, the man is considered bad and the girl, unless doctored, may sicken. Later, ordinary cohabitation is allowed. This species of ceremonial coitus is called *Kwaza masala* or in Chinyanja, *Ku-tapa mafuta*, "to roll away the oil," referring to the oil with which the girl was anointed at *Chipoto*. A girl who has no betrothed, on returning from *Chipoto* to her grandmother is given medicine similarly to prevent her sickening.

584 *Betrothal and marriage in adult life.* Apart from child betrothal, when a man seeking a wife, sees a girl he fancies, he talks the matter over with his brother, uncle, or some friend, who then goes and makes overtures to the girl's uncle or brother, her guardian or *sponsor*[2] as he is called. The *sponsor* corresponds very closely to our idea of a god-parent; he may be called the *sponsor*. The word "surety" is used by Macdonald.[3]

[1] Vide index, p. 388. [2] *Sponsor* is a word adopted from the Chin. *Nkwasa*.
[3] Macdonald, op. cit., vol. i, p. 118.

3:Stanzus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

30 [548] that she is tattooed more profusely on the buttocks and legs. The cloaket of beads was formerly made like *mapanda* with a bark-cloth core, called *mbanda* or *mbala* (*bu-wula*, to slip off), referring to the *mbala* being slipped off over the legs. The fashion now is to wear single strings of beads; each string is of one color but all the strings are different and perhaps number a dozen or more.

Lipamba: a bead belt three-inches wide, worn by Yao women near Lake Nyasa. A bead apron, *kiejaya*, is also worn by them but not near Zombo (Pl. VI, fig. 2).

[783] A woman removes her beads when she is "unclean," that is: (a) during the menstrual period, (b) during the period of mourning for a near relative when coition is forbidden, (c) before the birth of a child and afterwards until such time as she may resume intercourse with her husband.

[772] A large variety of beads has long been used by the Yao. There are some rarely seen now which were much prized in years gone by, while others are of quite recent introduction. There is no evidence that they themselves made beads and there are few which are probably not of European manufacture.

291 Clothing. The Yao used bark-cloth before the introduction of woven materials. The older people may still be seen in it and it is used in most of the ceremonies. At one time, they also used to weave a cloth called *likamanda* from a native cotton plant. This has been given up since the introduction of imported materials.

For the method of wearing cloth, see Pl. II, fig. 2. The very poorest people wear only a strip of calico round the pudenda, held in position by a string round the waist hanging long behind and in front; this is called *mbetke*. Yao women, when menstruating, wear [841] under this a little piece of cloth called *likumbi;* it is only worn at this time and not always as in certain other tribes.

721 Warfare. Fighting has naturally played a large part in the life of the Yao as among other African tribes, but at no time were these people a trained fighting race. Warfare was of a desultory character consisting mostly of raids by one feudal chief upon another. A party of men belonging to a chief at enmity with another, meeting some of his followers would challenge them, "*Akumbe*, who are you for?" The name of the rival chief in answer was the sign for battle to begin. A fake answer would never be given to gain an advantage. 726 When about to throw a spear, the thrower calls to his adversary.

The Yao have possessed guns for a long time. Going out to fight, the Yao used to [771] leap from one foot to the other, and spin their guns around in their hands. They made their own stocks for the rifles. They also used to make a small, cast-iron cannon about three feet long, called *kambale*, "a little nose." It was carried in the arms and was touched off by a torch. Drums called *ranjo* were taken into battle. There is an old war drum [534] at Malemya's village, taken in 1895 by the old Malemya from a *Mang'anja* chief called Mkukumbo who lived near Lake Chiuta. Since then, this drum has always gone into battle with Malemya. Around it his men would dance and anyone who had killed a man in battle would run up to it and spit upon it in salutation.

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

Women wear their cloth folded across the upper level of the breasts from right to left. Men and women often have two cloths, one over the loins, only the second fastening over the chest.

A menstruating woman also wears a small piece of calico corresponding to a diaper supported by string round the waist.[1] The same thing is worn after childbirth for six months. Angoni women always wear them.

The Angoni, Chipeta wear their cloth toga-fashion, carrying a fold of cloth on the left arm. An Angoni chief wears three such, blue, white and coloured, the first outside, the last next to the skin.

The material used is now practically everywhere European-made calico, formerly bark cloth only was used by Nyanja, though weaving had been accomplished by Angoni, where skins were and are used as articles of clothing.

There is nothing to distinguish men of various grades, etc. Fashion at the present time is very capricious—some patterned cloth being much worn one month will have no sale a month later; this is true both of men and of women.

There is no class uniform, and no "costumes" are worn save in dancing (q.v.).

Men are now seen wearing a piece of calico twisted up on the head in turban form, a custom lately introduced from the coast—the only indigenous head-gear is the string skull-cap worn by Angoni widows.

Under the heading of dress must be included the bead aprons worn by Yao and Angoni. Among the former the use of this garment is restricted to the women, who in the house sometimes wear nothing else; among the Angoni the children often have them and no other clothing.

Sandals are sometimes made of skin and fastened on the foot with a thong when crossing thorny country.

Among Angoni the *mwondo* only used to be worn; this is a small hard-cased fruit which was hollowed out and worn just covering the glans penis.

Food, etc.

The staple food throughout the country is either maize or rice, the latter only at various spots on the lake shore where it can be grown. Two fixed meals per diem are taken, at 9 or 10 a.m. and again at 6 p.m.; each consists of *nsima* porridge made from maize flour or rice flour or boiled rice with some *ndiwo* (relish) to which the salt is added. At odd times the native will eat anything that opportunity offers—a piece of cassava root, a boiled sweet potato, a roasted maize cob, etc.

The *nsima* is made by stirring flour (*ufa*) into boiling water till a stiff paste is formed; this is kept cooking for five minutes and then scraped out with a wooden

[1] Diaper *m mthoto*; a woman keeps five or six; they are never put away in baskets but always hung up; a woman changes every time she bathes, using two or three per diem; they may be given to a female child to wear, but are then not worn again by a woman.